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CHAL-0747  
Copy 1 of 5

18 September 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Plans)

SUBJECT : Reassignment of Colonel Leo P. Geary,  
USAF - AFCIG-5

1. I know that you share our serious concern over the reassignment of Colonel Geary within the next few months. His departure will come at an extremely critical time since initial arrangements for development and support of the OXCART project will be underway at that time. All are agreed that this project has great national importance, and that its accomplishment will be extremely difficult. Bureaucracy, mountains of papers back and forth, and misunderstandings with the Air Force, even if minor in nature, could have a disastrous effect on the timetable you have established. So you must consider with great care his replacement and the qualifications required.

2. Since June 1958 Colonel Geary and I have exchanged very few pieces of paper. Major Air Force commitments of effort and resources have been made on the basis of telephone calls and discussions. Typical examples follow. Procurement of J-75 engines was to cost in the neighborhood of [ ] In about one day's time Leo secured Air Force approval for this money. Even under a program approval system, this action could not be accomplished in that short time. On the basis only of telephone calls Leo committed substantial quantities of theater airlift much earlier than a good conservative staff officer would do, on his own authority. The two cases I have in mind were, first the [ ] staging last year and, secondly, the prepositioning of C-130's at Adana this year. In each case there was no better than a 50-50 chance for a mission approval, but we agreed that early commitment of airlift to Adana would enhance pre-mission posture. Next, he has never been reluctant to carry our fight directly to the Chief or Vice Chief of Staff and has been the originator of some of the toughest messages to major field commanders I have seen. I know of no Colonels in the Air Force and few other senior officers who are willing to commit major Air Force resources solely on their own judgment. His independence in thought and action are without

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parallel in my experience in the Air Force. Any and all arguments or misunderstandings which arise are frankly and clearly stated by him to the individual concerned without regard to rank or any consideration other than successful mission accomplishment. This makes Colonel Geary unusually easy to work with since his sense of mission orientation and importance is identical to ours.

3. If one agrees with the above description of his outstanding characteristics then selection of his successor is an almost impossible task. When one adds to the selection difficulty the Air Staff Reorganization of his activity, which will partially curtail his successor's ability to "wheel and deal," then it is difficult to see how the tight time schedule required by OXCART will be achieved.

4. CONCLUSION: Colonel Geary must remain as presently set up, unfettered by the inherent bureaucracy of a large staff.

5. RECOMMENDATION: That, in the near future, you and General Cabell discuss with General White and General Walsh the specific problem of supporting OXCART with a view to persuading them to have Leo continue under his present staff arrangement or one that will continue to give him the freedom of action he has enjoyed to date.

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WILLIAM BURKE  
Colonel, USAF  
Acting Chief, DPD-DD/P

Recommendation in para. 5 APPROVED: *(after careful thought and a talk with the victim)*

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Deputy Director (Plans)

*30 Sept*  
Date

*M.R. Discussed with Gen Strother 10 Nov. He sympathetic on security issue but not asked to have Col. Geary without supervision. [Redacted]; agreed to keep supervision.*

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*SECRET to reasonable minimum*  
Approved For Release 2003/12/18 : CIA-RDP63-00813A000600040033-6 *CP*